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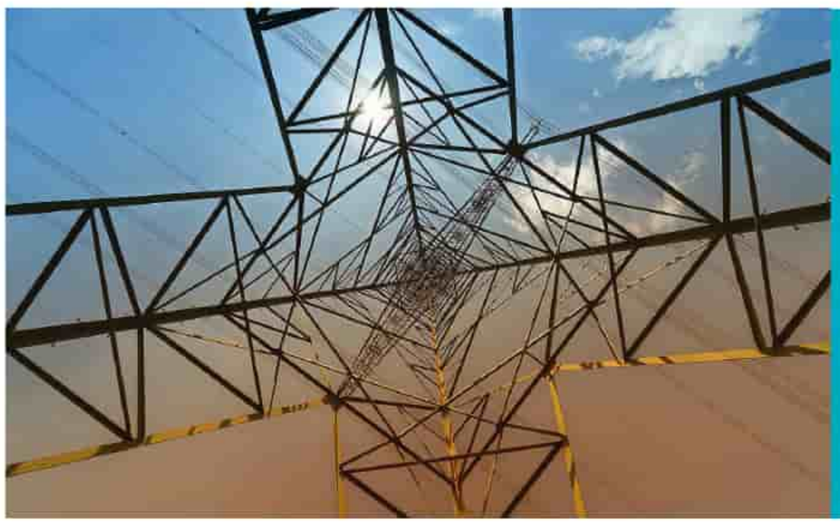
Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 27 | Min 21 | Humidity 74% Light rain Sensex 82,755 | Nifty 25,244 | Gold 97,115 | Silver 1,05,210 | Dollar 86.09 | Euro 99.84 | GBP 117.24

LIVING CONDITION

Over 2.5 lakh households in State in the lurch after enforcement of rule mandating Occupancy Certificate for electricity, water connections

PAGE 2



LOST IN THE RAIN

Collapse of 1,581 electric poles, damage to 229 transformers and more — rains have left a Rs 5-crore hole in BESCOM's purse

PAGE 5

As Postgraduates queue up for anganwadi jobs amid white-collar job fears and shrinking opportunities, experts say this may help change the face of early education

NO JOB TOO SMALL

Qualifications: SSLC pass for workers, Class 4 for assistants

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In a telling reflection of the current job market, even highly educated youth — including postgraduates and B.Ed holders — are now applying for Anganwadi worker and assistant positions, traditionally seen as low-paying pink-collar jobs. The fear of unstable employment in the private sector, coupled with shrinking opportunities in the government and corporate space, has forced thousands of qualified individuals to look for security, however modest, in grassroots roles like Anganwadi work.

Overqualified, yet willing

The eligibility criteria for Anganwadi workers and assistants in Karnataka were once modest: An SSLC (Class 10) pass for workers and as low as Class 4 for assistants. However, in recent years, the government has revised these to PUC (Class 12) and SSLC respectively. Despite this, many applicants now far exceed the minimum qualifications.

Why is this job becoming attractive

Sources said that the once-undesirable Anganwadi position is now viewed as a stable and respectable alternative amidst the turbulence of today's job market. With job insecurity looming in the private sector and mass layoffs becoming commonplace, government or semi-government roles — no matter how basic — are seen as a safe haven. Anganwadi jobs, with their structured hours and local postings, also appeal to women professionals looking to balance family life with work.

"Even if the pay is less, at least the job is steady. It's better than waiting indefinitely for a better offer," said a postgraduate applicant.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 »

Livelihood matters: Anganwadi workers have had to time and again raise their voices to demand their basic rights (File photo)

> **"What was once seen as a fallback option for women with minimal education is now attracting the best minds — not by choice, but by compulsion. Still, it's a silver lining that early education might get the attention it always deserved**
>
> —HC lawyer

Loan shark attack

Man loses over Rs 3 lakh after applying for instant loan from app that appeared to function like real lending platform

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In a worrying case that adds to the growing list of cyber frauds in the country, a Bengaluru resident lost ₹3.67 lakh after falling prey to a scam involving a fraudulent loan application promising instant credit. The incident has sparked concern over the rising menace of fake loan apps that target unsuspecting users under the guise of quick financial help.

According to the complaint filed, the incident took place in the early hours of June 17, when the victim downloaded a loan app that advertised instant approval and zero documentation. After submitting his personal details and completing the in-app document verification process, a sum of ₹3.67 lakh was debited from his Karnataka Bank account not once, but twice.

CAUGHT IN THE NET

Startled by the sudden loss of funds, the victim called the customer service number listed on the app. However, the response only deepened the suspicion. The caller on the other end claimed the amount was an "instant EMI" for the loan, despite no disbursement being received. The victim was left without funds and with no legitimate explanation.

While the app appeared to function like a real lending platform, police believe it was a sophisticated front to extract sensitive banking and personal details. What's more concerning, officers said, is that the scam

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 »

THINGS TO DO

01 Melody lane

Rajesh Krishnan will be performing live, presenting a soulful, nostalgic, and electrifying night. The iconic playback singer will be celebrating decades of Kannada musical brilliance by mesmerising the audience with timeless hits.

Where: Orion Mall, Rajajinagar;
When: July 26, 6.30 pm

02 Rally for a cause

St Joseph's Pre-University College is organising a rally to create awareness against drug addiction and illicit human trafficking. Additionally, a street play is also being organised by the students of the university's Dramatics Club.

Where: St Joseph's PU College, Ashok Nagar;
When: June 26, 10.30 am to 12.30 pm

03 Artistic tribute

Indian Institute of Cartoonists is presenting 'Through the Eyes of RK Laxman', a tribute exhibition in 78 colourful caricatures.

Where: Indian Cartoon Gallery, Sivanchetti Gardens;
When: June 7 to June 28

04 Tuneful morning

Swar, a platform dedicated to the promotion and preservation of Indian classical music, is presenting 'Colours of India – Morning Raagas', a soulful morning of melodious explorations in Hindustani and Carnatic traditions.

Where: Artkhoj, JP Nagar;
When: June 28, 10 am

05 Stage struck

Urban Chaupaal is presenting 'Udhedbun', a heartwarming yet comical exploration of love, relationship, and cultural clashes.

Where: Alliance Francaise, Vasanth Nagar;
When: June 28, 4 pm and 7 pm

Mandatory OC rule leaves 2.5 lakh houses without power

Applications for water and electricity connections submitted without valid OC are being rejected outright, with new temporary connections also on halt

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More than 2.5 lakh households in the state are left in the dark—literally—after the enforcement of a rule mandating an Occupancy Certificate (OC) to obtain electricity and water connections. The move, implemented as per a Supreme Court directive, has created severe hardship for residents who built shelters in search of security but are now living without basic amenities.

Following the apex court's order, both the Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM) and the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) have made OC submission compulsory for granting utility connections. Applications for new water and electricity connections now require a valid OC, and those submitted without it are being rejected outright. Even applicants who submitted their requests prior to the rule coming into effect are being subjected to the new guidelines.

As a result, thousands of newly constructed buildings remain without access to power and drinking water. BESCOM has also stopped installing permanent meters for those with temporary connections, forcing many to rely on costly public utilities. More than one lakh homes in BESCOM's jurisdiction are reportedly without electricity. The process of granting temporary connections to newly laid foundations and ongoing constructions has also come to a halt, delaying countless dreams of owning a home.

Reportedly, within BBMP limits, there are over 6 lakh properties with disputed legality, unable to obtain sanctioned plans and a valid occupancy certificate

Sources said that a major hurdle lies in the fact that buildings constructed on revenue sites and 'B' Khata properties are not eligible for plan sanction, OC, or Completion Certificate (CC) under existing laws

While over one lakh people who recently built homes or are constructing them have approached BESCOM for connections, all applications without OC have been rejected. On the water supply front too, BWSSB has ceased providing water and sewer connections to buildings without OC. Up to December 17, 2024, the board had accepted penalty payments from 40,629 property owners without OC, but has now suspended the process following the Supreme Court directive. As of now, 3,070 connection applications are pending clearance, and thousands more have been rejected.

Sources said that a major hurdle lies in the fact that buildings constructed on revenue sites and 'B' Khata properties are not eligible for plan sanction, OC, or Completion Certificate (CC) under existing laws. There are over 6 lakh such properties within BBMP limits, many of which already have buildings on them. Since these sites cannot obtain sanctioned plans, the public is questioning how they are expected to procure OC or CC. With the legality of these properties still under dispute in the Supreme Court and the denial of 'A' Khata conversions, residents find themselves in a regulatory deadlock.

The enforcement of the OC rule has also dealt a blow to the construction industry. Sales of materials like cement, steel, jelly, and sand have slowed down significantly, affecting government revenue and suppliers alike. The government, complying with the Supreme Court order, has made OC mandatory for all utility connections. However, without necessary amendments, this move threatens to paralyse development and deepen the public's woes.

Energy Minister KJ George confirmed that electricity connections for buildings without OC have been suspended in accordance with the Supreme Court's directive. "The cabinet will discuss and decide on possible amendments to address the issue," he said.

No building without approved plan

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has urged citizens not to construct houses without approved building plans and occupancy certificates, following a Supreme Court ruling that bars water and electricity connections to such properties. Highlighting that over 2.5 lakh households in Karnataka lack the required approvals, he said the government will consult legal experts and officials to explore solutions. He warned that once built illegally, regularisation becomes difficult and essential services cannot be guaranteed.

Responding to concerns about the swift enforcement in Karnataka, Shivakumar explained that the state acted on directions from regulatory authorities to comply with the court's order. He clarified that this ruling overrides previous judgments, emphasising its nationwide applicability.

Unauthorised schools charging exorbitant fees

Several unauthorised private (unaided) schools are allegedly collecting exorbitant fees from students despite lacking formal approval from the Education Department. This has sparked widespread concern amongst parents and education activists. From kindergarten to class 10, numerous schools are operating without permission, continuing to admit students and run classes. These schools, despite their unapproved status, charge fees ranging from Rs 60,000 to Rs 1 lakh per student annually, especially under the guise of offering English-medium education.

It is reported that around 15% of the schools in Bengaluru Rural district, including both state syllabus and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum institutions, operate without proper authorisation.

Sources said that parents are unknowingly enrolling their children in these unapproved schools. Often, these schools manipulate documentation—using different school names in hall tickets and report cards—to mask their illegal operations. Consequently, students appear for board exams under the name of an approved school, while being taught in an unrecognised one. **–BMB**

Surge in vegetable prices following rains

Continuous rains over the past two weeks have caused significant crop damage, leading to a sharp increase in the prices of leafy greens and vegetables across Bengaluru. Beetroot prices have been steadily rising for over a month and now hover between Rs 90 to Rs 100 per kg in the retail market, with Horticultural Producers' Cooperative Marketing and Processing Society (HOPCOMS) quoting Rs 117 per kg. White brinjals, which were earlier available at Rs 40 to Rs 50 per kg, have doubled in price, now selling for Rs 80 per kg at HOPCOMS. Fat green chillies have crossed the Rs 100 mark, and prices of beetroot and carrots remain steep.

The rains have not only reduced yield but also affected the quality of produce. Most leafy greens such as dill (sabbasige), spinach (palak), amaranthus (dantu), and fenugreek (menthya) are being sold between Rs 30 and Rs 40 per bunch. With the ongoing wedding season and festivals, the demand for vegetables has soared, further contributing to the price hike.

However, HOPCOMS officials predict some relief post July 8, when the inauspicious Ashada month begins and the number of auspicious events will reduce, potentially leading to a dip in demand and prices. Coconut prices, which had shot up in recent months, have seen a slight drop. From Rs 90 per kg, rates have come down to Rs 80. In some localities, small coconuts are available for Rs 30 to Rs 35 apiece, although prices vary by area.

Tomato prices, too, have surged due to crop damage caused by heavy rains in Kolar, Chikkaballapura, and surrounding areas. **–BMB**

Police cross line, turn into robbers

Officials stop man late at night, search his phone without consent, threaten fake drug case, and extort ₹37,000 before releasing him

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What happened to me is not just corruption; it was a crime, but the police have not filed my FIR yet. I want the culprits to be subjected to the same legal framework that applies to all the citizens of the country," said the victim after being extorted for Rs 37,000 by police officers. Two police officers were suspended following a departmental inquiry for allegedly extorting ₹37,000 from a differently-abled man during a late-night incident in Indiranagar on June 14. The victim, who wishes to remain unnamed, accused the officers of extortion after a night out at a local pub.

According to the victim's complaint, the ordeal began after he exited Doff Pub, located on the second floor of Navajyothi Complex on 100 Feet Road, around 11.49 pm. While he was waiting outside for an auto booked via an app, two men on a red motorcycle approached him, identified themselves as police officers, Constable Parameshwar Nayak and Head Constable Sharan Basappa Poojari, and began questioning him in Kannada, asking, "What are you doing here?"

Despite cooperating and answering all questions, the victim said the officers proceeded to search his belongings without consent. They allegedly confiscated his phone, forced him to unlock it, and browsed through his WhatsApp messages. The officers then threatened him with a fabricated "drug test" scenario, falsely claiming it would result in a non-bailable offence.

Fearing wrongful arrest and abuse of power, the victim was forced to ride triple on their motorcycle without a helmet to a quieter location on 9th A Main Road. There, the officers allegedly demanded to see his bank balances via Google Pay and, upon discovering Rs 42,000 in his account, demanded a bribe of ₹50,000 to "let him go," claiming that similar cases could cost lakhs to settle.

The victim was coerced into calling a friend to arrange funds, being strictly instructed not to mention the police. After receiving ₹10,000 via UPI, he was ordered to withdraw the remaining amount from ATMs. He made multiple withdrawals from nearby SBI and Axis Bank ATMs totalling ₹40,000. Despite pleading, the officers accepted ₹37,000 and returned his phone and bag. The officers also reportedly photographed the victim's Aadhaar card before releasing him and instructed him not to take an auto or cab from the area to avoid raising suspicion.

In the complaint, the victim stated, "The officers displayed extreme levels of misconduct as public servants, criminally intimidated me with false statements, confiscated my belongings, and wrongfully restrained me until they were able to successfully extort me for Rs 37,000. I, therefore, am writing to you to get justice in this regard by getting my amount returned, which I was extorted for, for absolutely no mistake or wrongful doing on my part."

The victim, who suffers from a disability, expressed trauma over the incident and said it had shaken his faith in law enforcement. He has submitted digital evidence, including payment screenshots, ATM withdrawal slips, and call logs to back his claims.

> **"The officers criminally intimidated me with false statements and confiscated my belongings** – Victim

"Though a departmental inquiry has been completed, the two officers remain suspended as a major investigation is set to follow," DCP East confirms.

However, no FIR has been filed yet. The victim has appealed to senior officials for justice.

"The thing that sets the victim apart from others is that he has shown the courage to come forward with a complaint. We all need to support him in his quest for justice. I request our Home Minister to take cognisance of this and to ensure that the FIR is filed so the police officers in question can face the consequences of their actions. The system needs to work for the citizens, not the other way around," Dushyant Dubey AKA St Broseph, Founder, Broseph Foundation.

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Cratered court road sparks outrage, demands urgency

Motorists, pedestrians and advocates continue to suffer daily on a 100-metre stretch riddled with potholes despite being steps from Karnataka's highest judicial offices

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PICS: KAUSHIK JN

The condition of the road adjacent to KGID and opposite Karnataka State Bar Concil in Cubbon Park

It appears the authorities have overlooked the poor condition of a crucial road stretch adjacent to the Karnataka High Court parking lot, between Dr BR Ambedkar Veedhi and the Press Club of Bengaluru. Despite its central location and importance, the road is riddled with potholes and craters. Advocates and visitors to the Press Club and Cubbon Park are forced to navigate this damaged stretch daily, highlighting the urgent need for repairs.

The 100-metre stretch is riddled with nearly 60 potholes and craters, making commuting a daily ordeal for motorists and two-wheeler riders heading to the Press Club of Bengaluru or Cubbon Park. Navigating the damaged road forces vehicles to slow down significantly, causing traffic snarls, especially during peak hours.

Expressing concern over the delay in asphalting the road, Purushotham P — a frequent visitor to Cubbon Park — urged authorities to urgently fill the potholes and craters. "These potholes are a hazard not just for motorists but also for pedestrians. I request the authorities to asphalt the road for the safety and convenience of all," he said.

Strongly criticising the authorities for failing to asphalt the road, social activist T Narasimha Murthy, said he and a group of like-minded citizens had submitted a letter over a year ago to the Registrar General of the Karnataka High Court, urging action.

"I have already written letters to the Registrar of the High Court on the condition of the road and the menace of the hawkers. A meeting is fixed today with the Registrar. I will discuss the road issue

– Kusuma G, Deputy Director, Horticulture Department (Cubbon Park)

"This is a prime location. If this road is in such poor condition, imagine the state of roads on the city's outskirts. I've also raised the issue with the deputy Chief minister and the Karnataka State Legal Aid Authority, but things are only getting worse. While I've received a copy of the Registrar General's letter to the BBMP Chief Commissioner and PWD Chief Engineer, no action has been taken so far," he said.

Urging the High Court and the Horticulture Department (Cubbon Park) to asphalt the road without further delay, pedestrian Naveen N expressed shock at encountering a large crater near the State Bar Council. "This is an important road. I don't understand why the authorities haven't ensured it's motorable. It wouldn't cost the government much to asphalt it. I urge them to prioritise this stretch and take immediate action to fix the issue," he said.

Meanwhile, Kusuma G, Deputy Director of the Horticulture Department (Cubbon Park), said she has already written to the Registrar of the High Court regarding both the poor condition of the road and the issue of hawkers. "A meeting is scheduled with the Registrar today, and I will be raising the road matter during our discussion," she said.

However, the Registrar of the High Court was unavailable for comment.

Campus protest grows over planned tree felling

Protesters demand a halt to proposed constructions that threaten hundreds of trees and rare species inside Bangalore University's Jnanabharathi campus

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A group of environmentalists and regular walkers at the Jnanabharathi campus have decided to stage a peaceful protest against the proposed development projects within the campus area.

Members of the Jnanabharathi Vayuvihargala Sangha, one of the groups organising the protest, claim that the biodiversity-rich Bangalore University Biopark is being gradually destroyed for development that could be avoided or relocated.

"Hundreds of trees are marked for felling under the pretext of educational infrastructure. These buildings could easily be constructed on the encroached land around the periphery of the Jnanabharathi campus or on sites with dilapidated structures," said Joseph Hoover, a member of the Sangha.

The protest comes in the wake of a public notice by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), inviting objections regarding a proposal to remove 419 trees on the campus. The Bangalore University (BU) has requested permission to clear

Bangalore University seeks nod to clear trees for academic, research blocks under PM-USHA scheme

these trees to make way for an academic and research block under the PM-USHA scheme.

Members of the Sangha recently appealed to the Governor of Karnataka, seeking immediate intervention to stop what they call a "slow but deliberate ecological assault" on the 660-acre university campus, one of Bengaluru's last remaining large green zones.

Environmentalists argued there is no valid reason to dismantle this self-sustaining ecosystem, which is home to thousands of trees, shrubs, 165 species of birds, and 160 species of butterflies. Many parts of the Biopark also serve as natural aquifers, helping recharge the groundwater table.

Environmentalists argue that there is no valid reason to dismantle this self-sustaining ecosystem, which is home to thousands of trees, shrubs, 165 species of birds, and 160 species of butterflies

"Protecting the Jnanabharathi campus is a constitutional duty under Article 51(A)(g), which urges citizens to protect the natural environment," said another protester. "Even Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar B Khandre has written to the additional chief secretary (Forests, Environment and Ecology) to consider declaring the campus a heritage site."

The peaceful protest is expected to take place on June 29 at the Jnanabharathi campus, with participation from concerned citizens, students, and environmental groups.

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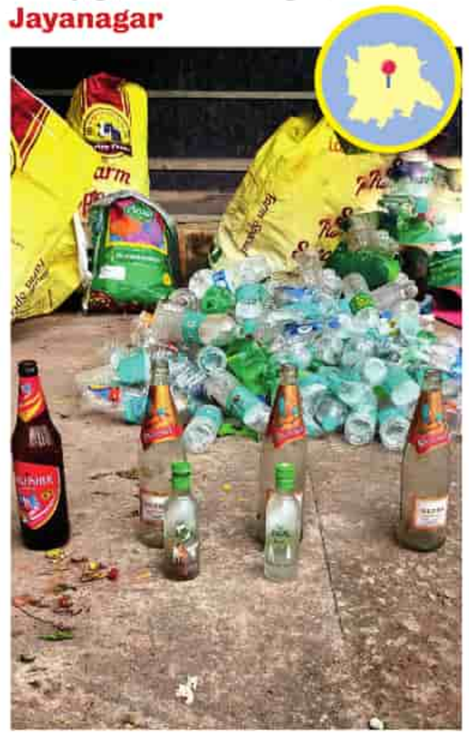
Sidewalk menace
Hebbal

Despite constant risk to pedestrians, reckless footpath riding continues unabated beneath the Hebbal flyover, with little to no enforcement in sight.

Playground neglect
Jayanagar



A rundown playground in central Jayanagar stands as a stark symbol of how public spaces in South Bengaluru are being overlooked and left to decay.

Road blockage
Hospital Road

An abandoned vehicle continues to choke the already congested Hospital Road, with no visible action from traffic police despite repeated public inconvenience.

Panel formed to restart child welfare member selection

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The state government has finally appointed the State Level Selection Committee, eight months after the previous committee's term expired. The state government issued an order on Monday appointing Justice P Krishna Bhat as the chairman of the State Selection Committee.

The State Level Selection Committee plays a vital role in selecting members for the district child welfare committees across the state. However, the State Level Selection Committee used to hit the headlines for the wrong reasons. A few child rights activists have filed petitions against the previous State Level Selection Committee for selecting the wrong persons to the child welfare committees.

The process of selecting child welfare committees for Bengaluru is yet to commence even after seven years due to the reasons best known to the previous State Level Selection Committees. According to sources, Bengaluru needs five to seven child welfare committees. Bellary is the other district that has no child welfare committee.

Child rights activists have welcomed the state government for constituting the State Level Selection Committee. Congratulating the newly appointed members of the State Level Selection Committee, Nagasimha G Rao, Child Rights Advocate, said, "Collaboration and knowledge sharing can significantly enhance their work. The selection of CWC members for Bengaluru and other districts is a crucial process that requires careful consideration. The new committee should prioritise candidates with a strong understanding of child rights, a commitment to the welfare of children, and the ability to work effectively with various stakeholders."

Dr KT Thippeswamy, a member of the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, has been appointed as a member of the State Level Selection Committee. "Our priority is to select the right people for the child welfare committees," he said.

It may be recalled that the High Court Dharwad Bench in November 2024 ordered the Women and Child Welfare Department to maintain the status quo on the selection of the members for the Bellary District Child Welfare Committee. HC Raghavendra, a child rights activist trainer from Ramasagara of Kampli taluk in Bellary district, filed a writ petition in the High Court Dharwad Bench seeking a direction to the State Level Selection Committee to consider his candidature for the post of a member of the district child welfare committee.

Storms blow out power infra, cause ₹5 cr loss

While rains bring relief to farmers, gusty winds uproot 1,581 poles and damage 229 transformers, snapping lines and burning pump sets; B'luru Urban suffers worst, with losses of ₹1.96 crore

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Year-wise rain-related losses to BESCOM
2022–23: ₹25.52 cr
2023–24: ₹15.22 cr
2024–25 (so far): ₹30.20 cr

Continuous rain and strong winds lashing several parts of Karnataka over the past few weeks have dealt a heavy blow to BESCOM (Bangalore Electricity Supply Company), resulting in damages worth crores.

The pre-monsoon showers and the early onset of the southwest monsoon have caused widespread damage in eight districts under BESCOM's jurisdiction, including the collapse of 1,581 electric poles and damage to 229 transformers, amounting to an estimated `5 crore loss.

While the rains have brought relief and cheer to farmers, the accompanying gusty winds have posed serious challenges, uprooting poles and damaging power transformers. Many power lines have snapped, disrupting supply and leading to the burnout of agricultural pump sets and motors.

A BESCOM official said, "Between April and June 9, the collapse of 1,581 power poles alone has caused a loss of ₹1.10 crore. BESCOM has spent ₹84.76 lakh on the purchase of new poles and ₹25.24 lakh on labour charges for repair works. The damage to 229 transformers has resulted in losses worth ₹2.81 crore. Nearly 1.46 lakh km of power lines have been damaged, with extensive breakage of electrical wires.

An additional ₹1.02 crore has been spent on installing new wires. Furthermore, 46 double-pole (DP) structures have been damaged, with an estimated ₹15 lakh spent on their restoration."

Clearing trees and branches

In response to the damage caused by the rains and winds, BESCOM has begun clearing trees and branches near power infrastructure, particularly along main roads, residential areas, and forest stretches. Officials have been instructed to carry out fresh inspections and remove dried or hazardous trees that could impact power lines, poles, and transformers.

Bengaluru urban hit the hardest

Among all the affected regions, the Bengaluru Urban district has suffered the most significant loss. A total of 210 electric poles and 132 transformers have been damaged, resulting in a loss of ₹1.96 crore.

District-wise estimated losses

Bengaluru Urban:	₹1.96 cr
Bengaluru Rural:	₹37.85 cr
Ramanagara:	₹76.70 cr
Kolar:	₹54.02 cr
Tumakuru:	₹40.79 cr
Davangere:	₹43.29 cr
Chikkaballapura:	₹13.66 cr
Chitradurga:	₹25.47 cr

Emergency stock of power equipment

To respond quickly to such crises, BESCOM has kept an emergency stock of essential electrical components, including poles, wires, and transformers.

Damaged infrastructure is being replaced immediately upon receiving public complaints to ensure an uninterrupted power supply.

Govt flags 14 substandard drugs

The Karnataka government's Drug Testing Laboratory declared 14 drugs manufactured by 14 different companies as "substandard" on Wednesday.

The state's Food Safety and Drug Administration department has directed chemists, wholesalers, doctors, hospitals, and nursing homes not to stock, sell, or use these drugs and cosmetics, an official statement said.

"In case they hold any stock, they are requested to inform the concerned area Drugs Inspector or Assistant Drugs Controller. The public is also advised not to use these drugs or cosmetics," the statement added.

The substandard drugs include compound sodium lactate injection IP (Ringer-Lactate solution for injection) manufactured by Ultra Laboratories (batch no: KI124110) and Tam Bran Pharmaceuticals; Pomol-650 (Paracetamol tablets I P 650 mg) by Aban Pharmaceuticals (batch no: 13-4536) and MITO Q7 Syrup by Bion Therapeutics India (batch no: CHS-40170) among others.

The department has urged strict compliance with these directions to safeguard public health. **PTI**

ED raids over seat scam

The sleuths of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday began raids and search operations at approximately 18 locations in Karnataka, including Bengaluru, in connection with an engineering seat scam.

According to sources, these raids are part of an ongoing investigation into an illegal money laundering case related to the fraudulent blocking of student seats in engineering colleges in Bengaluru.

The ED's search operations on Wednesday were specifically targeting individuals connected to BMS Engineering College, as well as Akash Institute of Engineering and other associated accused parties, the sources said.

The raids are being conducted in connection with the engineering seats scam that occurred during the 2024-25 academic year in Bengaluru, when over 2,000 seats were blocked illegally.

Previously, the Malleshwaram police in Bengaluru had arrested 12 individuals in connection with this case, including a contract employee of the Karnataka Examination Authority (KEA).

Several engineering colleges were also issued notices at that time. The ED has now taken over the case that was initially registered by the local police. **IANS**

Samarthanam sister's shine bright on inclusive music stage

Debut performance by visually-impaired Hindustani singers redefines inclusion, empowerment, and musical excellence on World Music Day celebration stage

| Y Maheswara Reddy
c-y.reddy@timesofindia.com

TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Visually-challenged performers break barriers, inspiring hundreds with music that celebrates diversity and inner strength. Inset: Anusha and Vasundhara

"I got Hindustani vocal training for 4 years, and I am very happy to be a part of Samarthanam sisters –Anusha, artist

To prove visually-challenged people are second to none provided passion, dedication, and commitment, two visually-challenged women – Anusha and Vasundhara – enthralled around 1,000 people, including specially challenged persons, with their melodious voices.

As part of a vibrant World Music Day celebration, the Samarthanam Trust for the Disabled launched the Samarthanam Sisters Anusha and Vasundhara, both visually impaired Hindustani vocalists at White Petals, Palace Grounds, recently. Their soulful debut, featuring performances in multiple regional languages, was headlined by the premiere of Sounds of Bharath, a signature track composed by Grammy Award-winning musician and Padma Shri awardee Ricky Kej.

The event drew notable personalities from the fields of politics, music, and cinema. Malleswaram MLA Dr Ashwathnarayan, music directors V Harikrishna, RP Patnaik, Subu Kota, and others graced the occasion. "Their voices are divine," remarked RP Patnaik, while Harikrishna added, "Art knows no boundaries."

Anusha, who underwent four years of formal training at Dr Gangubai Hangal University, said she was proud to represent the Samarthanam Sisters. "I am very happy to be part of this journey," she told Bangalore Mirror.

Vasundhara Raturi, trained under renowned vocalist Samhita Nandi, shared her long-standing connection with the Trust. "I met Samarthanam founder Mahantesh when he visited the US 20 years ago. I came to Bengaluru last year to join hands with the Trust. Through our music, we want to convey a strong message of women empowerment, inclusion, and equality," she said.

The Trust also launched its Music for Inclusion campaign, with a USA tour set to begin in July, invited by Subu Kota, Patron of Samarthanam USA.

"This is a defining moment for inclusive art," said Dr Mahantesh G Kivadasannavar, founder of Samarthanam. The evening ended with a standing ovation one song, one soul, one stage at a time.

Tree felling halted for review

Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar B Khandre has directed officials not to grant permission for the felling of 368 trees on Cantonment Railway Colony campus until further instructions.

The Minister issued the directive after meeting officials from the Karnataka Forest Department, the Karnataka Biodiversity Board, and Professor TV Ramachandra from the Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science (IISc). The move follows appeals from local residents and environmentalists urging the government to protect the green space by declaring it a biodiversity heritage site.

Khandre instructed officials to begin the process of assessing the area for such a designation and ensure no trees are cut during this period. He also noted that a committee, led by the Chief Conservator of Forests, has been formed to study the carrying capacity of the Western Ghats. The report, which will factor in recent landslides and related fatalities, is expected in six months. **–BMB**

Beloved BBP leopard Sanjay dies

Bannerghatta Biological Park (BBP) has reported the death of a leopard named Sanjay on Wednesday. Sanjay, rescued as a four-month-old cub from HD Kote in Mysore Division on July 14, 2009, lived for 16 years in captivity—far beyond the typical 10–12 years in the wild. He had been recumbent since June 24 and died due to peribiliary cystic liver, hepatitis, and age-related multi-organ failure. Visceral samples have been sent for further examination. **–BMB**

1,300+ cases related to fake loan apps in state in 5 years

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

mirrors a growing pattern seen across several states in recent months, fake loan apps offering easy money, only to trap users into fraudulent deductions, harassment, or even blackmail.

Rising threat

Cybercrime experts warn that fraudulent loan apps are increasingly targeting middle-income and salaried individuals with urgent financial needs. Most of these apps operate outside regulatory frameworks, often mimicking the interface of legitimate fintech platforms. They are usually distributed via third-party websites or lesser-known app stores, bypassing scrutiny from official channels.

According to Karnataka police data, over 1,300 cases related to fake loan apps have been registered statewide in the last five years, with Bengaluru accounting for a major share. Victims, including students, women, and professionals, are lured by promises of quick loans, only to find their personal data misused and bank accounts debited. In 2024 alone, 134 such cases were reported across the state, amounting to nearly 4 crore in losses.

Authorities have taken up the complaint and initiated an investigation. They have urged citizens to be extremely cautious while downloading financial apps and to verify whether the platform is registered with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) or associated with any recognised NBFC or banking institution.

Users are also advised to read app reviews, avoid granting unnecessary permissions, and never share sensitive details like Aadhaar, PAN, or bank account credentials with unverified sources.

Overqualified, but ready to work

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Early childhood education

This influx of educated staff into Anganwadis is also transforming the quality of early childhood education in rural and semi-urban areas. Parents are beginning to appreciate the presence of well-qualified workers who can provide a learning-friendly atmosphere right from the foundational years. With the Karnataka government set to launch English-medium instruction and LKG classes in select Anganwadi centers from next academic year, the timing couldn't be better. The presence of trained B.Ed and D.Ed professionals is expected to raise the standard of pre-primary education across the board.

Experts believe this trend is not just a commentary on the job crisis but also a silent revolution in how grassroots-level public services are being perceived. "This is not merely recruitment; it's an investment in the future of our education system. Highly qualified staff in Anganwadis can lay the foundation for better learning outcomes later," said a senior official. Echoing similar sentiments, a senior High Court lawyer said, "What was once seen as a fallback option for women with minimal education is now attracting the best minds — not by choice, but by compulsion. Still, it's a silver lining that early education might get the attention it always deserved."

Use Kannada for admin purpose, depts told

The Karnataka government has instructed officials to use Kannada extensively for administrative purposes across all state departments and district administrations, warning that disciplinary action will be taken against those who fail to comply. Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh issued a circular in this regard on Tuesday.

"Despite several circulars issued to administer in Kannada, the Kannada Development Authority has been reporting that the instructions are not being followed. In this context, it has been reiterated that the instructions must be followed compulsorily, and disciplinary action will be taken against those who violate them," the circular said.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah directed that files without Kannada notings be returned and explanations sought, stressing poor implementation of language instructions in government correspondence. **–PTI**

'Not a luxury, but a necessity'

Association contests ban in court, says these services are essential to reduce traffic congestion

In a High Court hearing on Wednesday, the Bike Taxi Welfare Association contested Karnataka's bike taxi ban, asserting that these services are essential for reducing traffic congestion rather than being a luxury.

INFOCUS BIKE TAXI BAN

The appeals against a single judge's order were heard by a division bench comprising Acting Chief Justice V Kameswar Rao and Justice CM Joshi, with Ola, Uber and Rapido as the appellants.

Previously, an April ruling had stated that "unless the State Government notifies relevant Guidelines under Section 93 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and Rules thereunder, the petitioners (Ola, Uber, Rapido) cannot operate as Aggregators offering Bike-Taxi Services".

The court had restricted the Transport Department from registering motorcycles as transport vehicles or issuing Contract Carriage Permits. Operations were to cease within six weeks, with an extension until June 15, effectively banning bike taxis from June 16.

Senior advocate Shashank Garg, representing the Bike Taxi Welfare Association, discussed the e-bike policy's aim of providing last-mile connectivity. Garg noted that whilst the State introduced e-bike taxi rules in 2021, contradicting a 2019 expert committee's recommendations against bike taxis in Bengaluru, these rules were withdrawn in 2024, allegedly due to political considerations.

Regarding fare regulation, Garg informed the court that the current rate was Rs 8 per kilometre, emphasising that bike taxis could access areas unreachable by cars and ambulances.

Senior advocate Dayan Chinnappa, representing two bike owners, argued that the state's refusal to issue contract carriage permits violated Article 19(1)(g) rights.

Contract carriage permits, issued by state governments, allow vehicles to operate under specific transportation contracts. Chinnappa emphasised that Aggregator rules permit bike taxi operations, and the State must register vehicles and grant permits accordingly.

He maintained that bike owners should be allowed to register on aggregator platforms, noting that Bengaluru's traffic issues stem from population growth, indicating economic development.

The next hearing is scheduled for July 2. —BMB

INBRIEF

Lokayukta raids KSPCB offices

Following complaints of corruption, negligence, and environmental law violations, Karnataka Lokayukta Justice BS Patil on Tuesday initiated a suo motu probe against officials of the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB).
As many as 27 teams comprising judicial and police officers conducted simultaneous raids at the KSPCB head office on MG Road and zonal offices in Shivanagar/ Basaveshwara Nagar and Peenya Industrial Area.
At the MG Road office, Justice Patil found that movement and cash records were not maintained and sought reports on pending pollution-related applications and action taken.
Upalokayukta Justice B Veerappa flagged attendance irregularities, suspicious UPI transactions, and lack of data on polluting industries and lake pollution in Shivajinagar. BMB

Prajwal Revanna seeks bail

Former JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna sought bail from the Karnataka High Court, citing procedural delays and altered circumstances since his detention.
He faces multiple serious allegations, including sexual assault, repeated rape, blackmail and criminal intimidation.
Senior advocate Prabhuling Navadgi, representing Prajwal Revanna, presented to the court that circumstances had evolved since the previous bail rejection, warranting a fresh consideration.
He emphasised that substantial delays in court proceedings provided sufficient grounds for bail consideration. BMB

Framed man seeks damages

A man has approached the High Court demanding Rs 5 crore compensation after being wrongfully charged with his wife's murder, who was discovered to be alive.
Earlier, the court cleared the man of charges and ordered police to pay him Rs 1 lakh as compensation for mishandling of the case. The petitioner has now challenged this compensation in the High Court. His petition states that the trial court failed to acknowledge his victim status. He highlighted his 1.5-year imprisonment and the resulting damage to his social standing. BMB

CRIME FILES

Prof found dead at home

A 34-year-old psychology professor was found dead under mysterious circumstances at his rented apartment in Soladevanahalli on Monday.
The deceased had been identified as Shreyas Tad, a native of West Bengal and son of a retired IAS officer, was teaching at Acharya College and living alone.
The incident came to light when his domestic help found the door locked from inside on Sunday. She returned on Monday, and upon finding no response again, alerted the apartment owner.
The owner, along with others, forced the door open and found Tad lying unresponsive on the bed.
Soladevanahalli police shifted the body for post-mortem and registered a case of unnatural death. The exact cause of death will be known after the autopsy report. BMB

2 men arrested for ganja trafficking

The Byatarayanapura police on Wednesday arrested two men for peddling narcotic substances from their rented accommodation in Hebbal. Acting on a tip-off, police raided a house in Patel Muniyappa Layout and seized 1,440 grams of jelly-infused ganja worth 3 lakh, along with 50,000 in cash and two mobile phones.
The arrested have been identified as TS Mohammed Zahid (25) and Afghan Mohammed (24), both originally from Tarikere, Chikkamagaluru district.

The duo, employed in private firms, had been residing in the city for the past three years according to the police.
Police said the two were allegedly distributing the contraband from their residence and had no prior criminal record. A case has been registered and further investigation is underway to trace the source of the drugs and possible local links. BMB

Couple dies by suicide at old age home

An elderly couple allegedly died by suicide inside their room at an old age home in JP Nagar 9th Phase during the early hours of Tuesday.
The deceased, Krishna Murthy (81) and his wife K Radha (74), were residents of Kamalamma Ramakrishnappa Trust's Shubhodaya Old Age Home in Kembathalli. Staff members discovered the couple's bodies and immediately informed their son, Vijay.
The Thalagattapura police have registered a case of unnatural death. No suicide note was found.
According to the police, the couple had a heated argument while watching television on Monday night. They suspect the argument may have triggered the act, though the exact sequence of events is yet to be confirmed.
Preliminary inquiry revealed that the couple had strained ties with their daughter-in-law and had requested to live separately. They were earlier housed at a Byatarayanapura old age home in 2021 before being taken back by their son. In 2023, they were shifted again to the JP Nagar facility due to continued domestic friction. BMB

PG owner held for sexual assault on woman resident

A PG owner in BTM Layout has been arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting a woman resident under the guise of interrogating her over a theft. The accused, identified as Raviteja Reddy, allegedly called the 27-year-old complainant—a dentist by profession—into his room on the morning of June 21, claiming to question her about a missing ring from the paying guest (PG) accommodation. The woman, who stays in Room 505 of ST, B Ladies PG, alleged that Reddy groped her, forcibly performed sexual acts, and threatened her when she resisted.
The complainant later sought medical attention at Jayanagar General Hospital and filed a police complaint on June 22. Following her statement, police registered an FIR under Sections 64(1), 74, and 75(1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Reddy was produced before a magistrate and remanded in 14-day judicial custody. BMB

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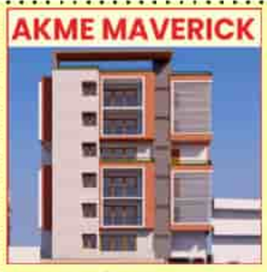

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I, Shakeel Ahmed Shaikh R/o Shakeel compound, Salmara, Karkala, Udupi 574104 present camp Bengaluru have changed my name to Shakeel Ahmed Peru Shaikh Affidavit Dt.25/06/2025 notary Harisha G, B'luru

I Rohan Chandrashekar Jain S/O, Chandrashekar Jain R/o No 612(15) 50th Cross 3rd Block Rajajinagar B B M P (central) Bengaluru - 560010 have changed my name to Rohan Jain.

I, Salman Ahmed B, R/o No 5 2nd Block Rbi Colony Jayanagar Bangalore 560011, Have Change My Name From Salman Ahamed P to Salman Ahmed B for All Purpose.

I, Sreekanth M & Vandana M, residing at Old No.253-89/A, New No.79, Electronic City Post, Doddanagamangala, Bengaluru-560 100, have changed our minor daughter name from SANVI S REDDY to S DIYASHVI SAMUDRIKA, affidavit dt: 24.06.2025 Notary B.M Chandrashekar, Bangalore

I, Ashajyothi Chandra Reddy E w/o Suresh Reddy Kasireddy , R/at # 4/1, 2nd Floor, 4th Cross, Near Ward Office, Byraveshwaranagar, Nagarbhavi Main Road, Bengaluru 560072have changed my name to Ashajyothi Kasireddy, for all purposes

I, Momina Khanum D/o Mohamed Matheen Khan ward no 23 Tippu Nagar tippu masjid Road Ramanagaram 562159 I have changed my name to Momeena Khanum for all purposes

I SHAILASHREE B C W/O CHANDRASHEKAR K R/O BELLANDUR , BENGALURU HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM SHYLA SHREE CHANDRA SHEKAR TO SHAILASHREE B C FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES.

I, Shrinivas Dev R/o No.90, 1st block, 1st cross, Bsk 3rd stage, 3rd phase, 4th main, Bengaluru 560085 have changed my name to Shrinivas Padmanabha Dev. I shall be called by this name for all purpose

I, Ranjitha B R/o No.133, 2nd cross, 16th main, JC nagar, Mahalakshmipuram, Bengaluru 560086 have changed my name to Ranjitha Anil Kumar Affidavit Dt.25/06/2025 notary Harisha G, B'luru

I Geeta urf Nagamma Ujjannavar r/o #1456 / 1 , Siddarudha Nagar , Old Hubli Hubli Dharwad -580024 hereby state that Geeta urf Nagamma Ujjannavar and Geeta Lokanath Ujjannavar both the names belong to me in future my name would be Geeta urf Nagamma Ujjannavar only

GALLERIA

HEALTH TIP: Fermented foods and probiotics can influence positive mood, sleep, and mental clarity

Herbs like ashwagandha and lion's mane are gaining popularity to balance stress, improve focus, and support brain health

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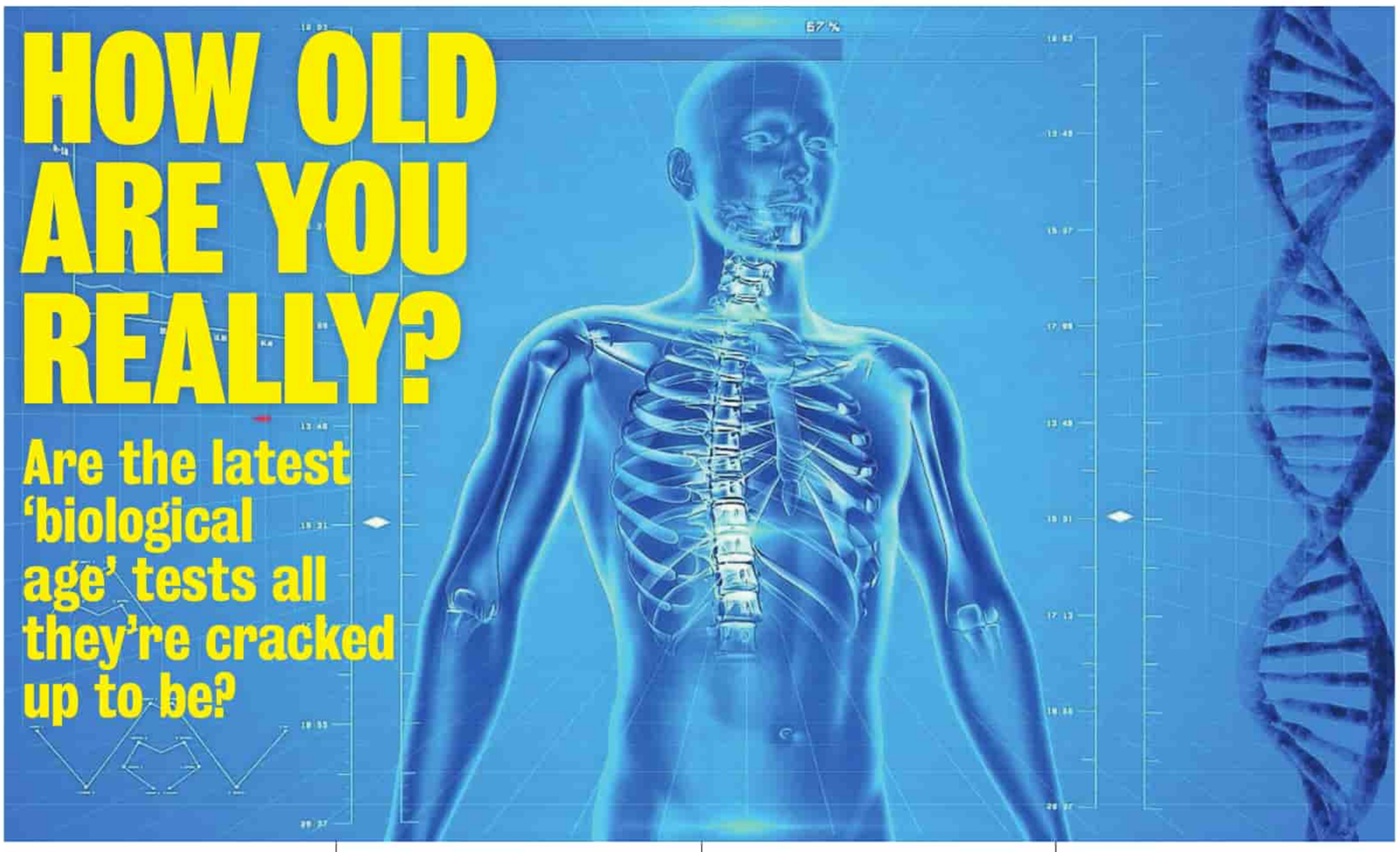
HOW OLD ARE YOU REALLY?

Are the latest 'biological age' tests all they're cracked up to be?



We all like to imagine we're ageing well. Now a simple blood or saliva test promises to tell us by measuring our "biological age". And then, as many have done, we can share how "young" we really are on social media, along with our secrets to success.

While chronological age is how long you have been alive, measures of biological age aim to indicate how old your body actually is, purporting to measure "wear and tear" at a molecular level.

The appeal of these tests is undeniable. Health-conscious consumers may see their results as reinforcing their anti-ageing efforts, or a way to show their journey to better health is paying off.

But how good are these tests? Do they actually offer useful insights? Or are they just clever marketing dressed up to look like science?

How do these tests work?

Over time, the chemical processes that allow our body to function, known as our "metabolic activity", lead to damage and a decline in the activity of our cells, tissues and organs.

Biological age tests aim to capture some of these changes, offering a snapshot of how well, or how poorly, we are ageing on a cellular level.

Our DNA is also affected by the ageing process. In particular, chemical tags (methyl groups) attach to our DNA and affect gene expression. These changes occur in predictable ways with age and environmental exposures, in a process called methylation.

Research studies have used "epigenetic clocks", which measure the methylation of our genes, to estimate biological age. By analysing methylation levels at specific sites in the genome from participant samples, researchers apply predictive models to estimate the cumulative wear and tear on the body.

What does the research say about their use?

Although the science is rapidly evolving, the evidence underpinning the use of epigenetic clocks to measure biological ageing in research studies is strong.

Studies have shown epigenetic biological age estimation is a better predictor of the risk of death and ageing-related diseases than chronological age.

Epigenetic clocks also have been found to correlate strongly with lifestyle and environmental exposures, such as smoking status and diet quality.

In addition, they have been found to be able to predict the risk of conditions such as cardiovascular disease, which can lead to heart attacks and strokes.

Taken together, a growing body of research indicates that at a population level, epigenetic clocks are robust measures of biological ageing and are strongly linked to the risk of disease and death

But how good are these tests for individuals?

While these tests are valuable when studying populations in research settings, using epigenetic clocks to measure the biological age of individuals is a different matter and requires scrutiny.

For testing at an individual level, perhaps the most important consideration is the "signal to noise ratio" (or precision) of these tests. This is the question of whether a single sample from an individual may yield widely differing results.

A study from 2022 found samples deviated by up to nine years. So an identical sample from a 40-year-old may indicate a biological age of as low as 35 years (a cause for celebration) or as high as 44 years (a cause of anxiety).

While there have been significant improvements in these tests over the years, there is considerable variability in the precision of these tests between commercial providers. So depending on who you send your sample to, your estimated biological age may vary considerably.

Another limitation is there is currently no standardisation of methods for this testing. Commercial providers perform these tests in different ways and have different algorithms for estimating biological age from the data.

As you would expect for commercial operators, providers don't disclose their methods. So it's difficult to compare companies and determine who provides the most accurate results – and what you're getting for your money.

A third limitation is that while epigenetic clocks correlate well with ageing, they are simply a "proxy" and are not a diagnostic tool.

In other words, they may provide a general indication of ageing at a cellular level. But they don't offer any specific insights about what the issue may be if someone is found to be "ageing faster" than they would like, or what they're doing right if they are "ageing well".

So regardless of the result of your test, all you're likely to get from the commercial provider of an epigenetic test is generic advice about what the science says is healthy behaviour.

Are they worth it? Or what should I do instead? While companies offering these tests may have good intentions, remember their ultimate goal is to sell you these tests and make a profit. And at a cost of around USD500, they're not cheap.

While the idea of using these tests as a personalised health tool has potential, it is clear that we are not there yet. For this to become a reality, tests will need to become more reproducible, standardised across providers, and validated through long-term studies that link changes in biological age to specific behaviours.

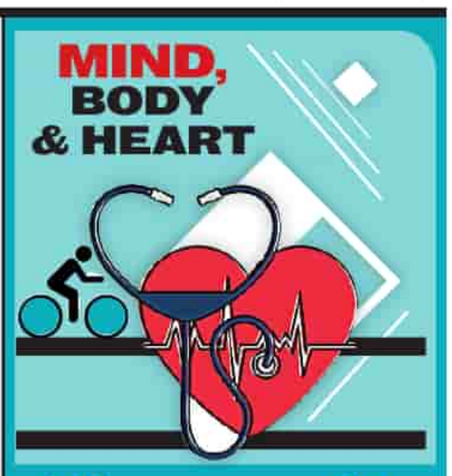
So while one-off tests of biological age make for impressive social media posts, for most people they represent a significant cost and offer limited real value.

The good news is we already know what we need to do to increase our chances of living longer and healthier lives. These include:

- improving our diet
- increasing physical activity
- getting enough sleep
- quitting smoking
- reducing stress
- prioritising social connection.

We don't need to know our biological age in order to implement changes in our lives right now to improve our health. (

By Hassan Vally, Deakin University, The Conversation)



All you need to know about...

Harballing

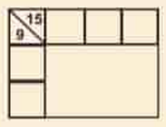
No hot & cold games

Originally coined by Logan Ury, director of relationship science at Hinge, hardballing is the fresh, no-nonsense dating trend that cuts through all the games. You don't have to pretend to stay cas', and you definitely don't have to pretend to go with the flow. On the contrary, you say exactly what you're looking for, and the other person decides if that works for them too, instead of playing mind games and going hot and cold on each other before one of you eventually ghosts the other. It's honest, direct, and kind of refreshing. Some might argue it's almost the same as intentional dating, but no, hardballing is the more intense version.

How to keep it real

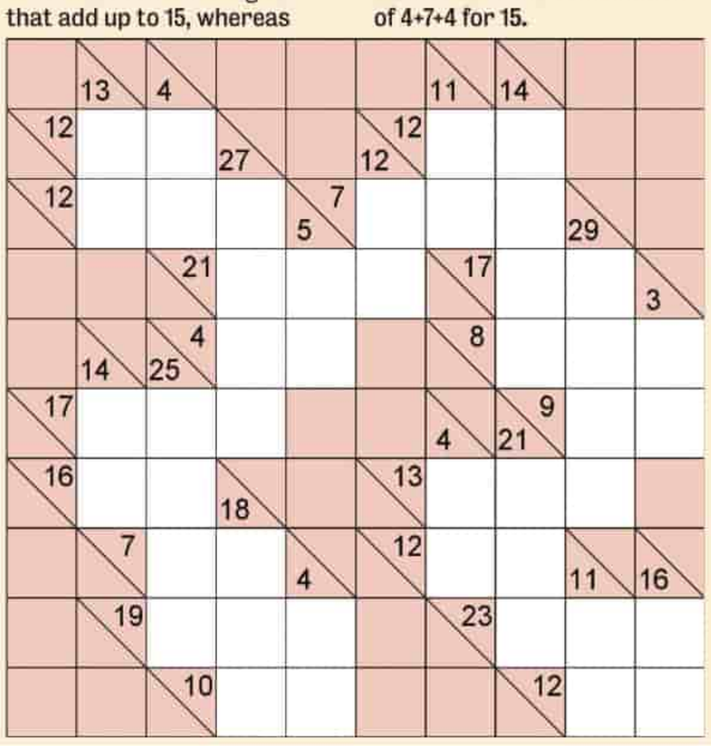
While the upside of hardballing is that you form genuine connections, the downside is that you might scare someone away if you're being too pushy. Thankfully, there's a right way to go about it. The first step is stating your intentions, which could be 'I'm looking to settle down' or 'I'm looking for something long term', and not 'Let's go book a venue for our future wedding right away,' State your intentions, but don't seem needy about your expectations from them specifically. This might make them feel overwhelmed and run in the opposite direction. Additionally, don't shy away from asking questions about what they're looking for. This will help you figure out their headspace, and definitely don't shy away from being clear that it doesn't work for you and letting them go. Hardballing might not guarantee a fairy-tale ending, but it delivers something just as valuable: mental clarity and peace over games and chaos. **—Femina**

Kakuro

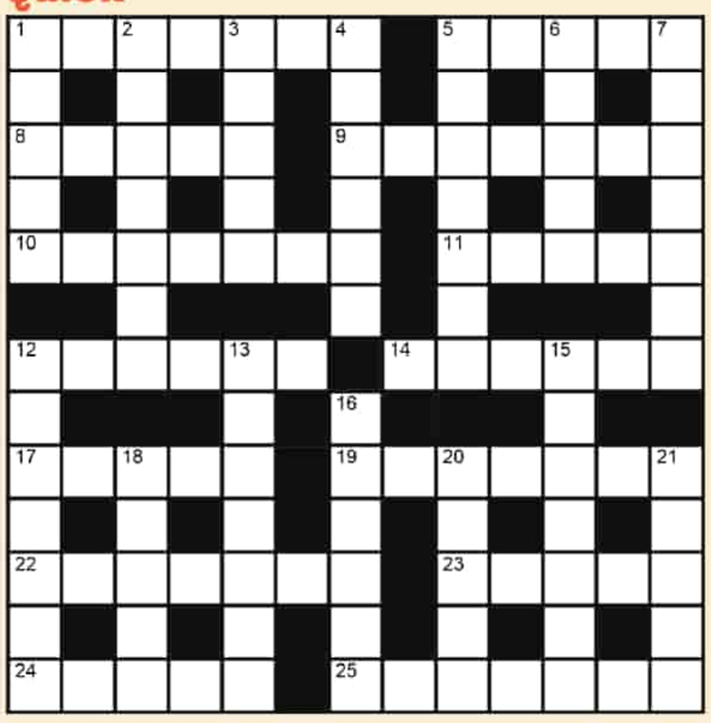


The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.

Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Theatre at Rajaji Nagar (7)
5 Likely to kill (5)
8 Superlatively bad? (5)
9 Short trips made for some particular purposes? (7)
10 Limited or confined? (7)
11 India's cricket trophy (5)
12 In short supply (6)
14 Be a member (6)
17 Lasso for the cowboy (5)
19 Ridiculous pretence (7)
22 An African spear (7)
23 Come home to ___ : recoil upon the originator? (5)
24 Tolerate (5)
25 Improves (5,2)

DOWN

1 Ex-India cricket captain __ of Pataudi (5)
2 Wart (7)
3 Performed (5)
4 Avaricious (6)
5 Capable of reproducing (7)
6 Polynesian kingdom (5)
7 ___ out : hitting or speaking out angrily? (7)
12 Rivulets (7)
13 Modified (7)
15 Public speakers (7)
16 ___ and save: be stingy? (6)
18 All __ ___ : confused ? (2,3)
20 Relating to gold (5)
21 Prevent by means of a legal authority (5)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: Y EQUALS H

YR NBZUURP YMVKRHO MX FSJIZIMJXK- ZK Z QRWWZB NJSHP RXOJHP YMVKRHO MX IYR USBUHR JO RVURBJBK.

Linemaro

You are so sweet, you are giving me cavities

Mindchow

Democracy is a religion. It is the worship of jackals by jackasses

Joke of the day

Success means only doing what you do well, letting someone else do the rest

Loop

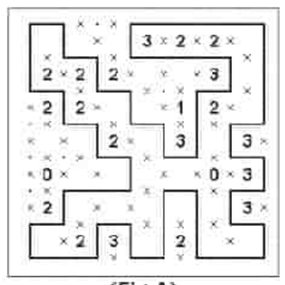
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

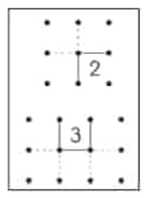
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

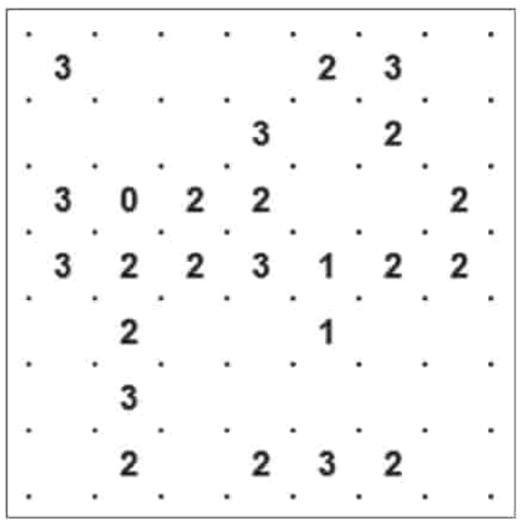
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



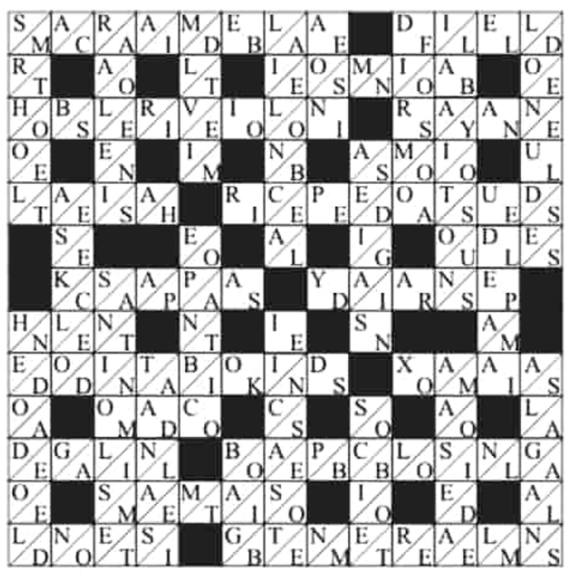
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
9		U		

ACROSS

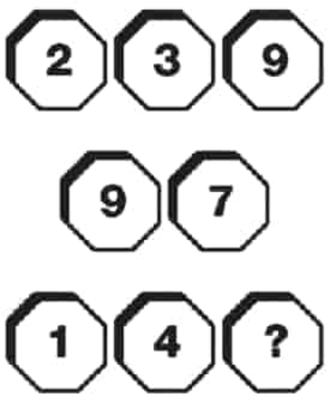
1 Scats; 6 I hunt; 7 Tiara; 8 Bream; 9 Dun at

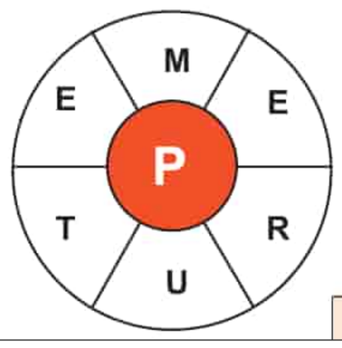
DOWN

1 Crude; 2 Amain; 3 Hub as; 4 Taint; 5 Tarts

Mensapuzzle

Which number completes the puzzle?





Bull's eye

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

09 Average; 10 Good; 12 Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

8			7		4			5
9	7						4	3
	5			8			7	
3			6		1			8
				7				
7			9		5			1
	4			5			1	
1	9						5	2
5			3		2			4

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 13

1 2 4 7

Medium = 11

3 4 5 6

Hard = 60

4 5 9 5

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

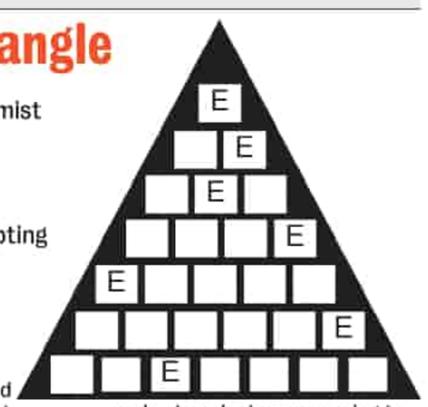
Differences: 1. Foot is moved. 2. Hole is in bottom of different shoe. 3. Hole in fence is lower. 4. Pocket is lower. 5. Mouth is open. 6. Line in sidewalk is added.

Riddler

Can you figure out this rebus? PinnAcLeS

Alpha triangle

1 Second vowel
2 Neon for the chemist
3 Creative start?
4 Clavicle, for one
5 Key material
6 Well in the past
7 Conforming, adapting



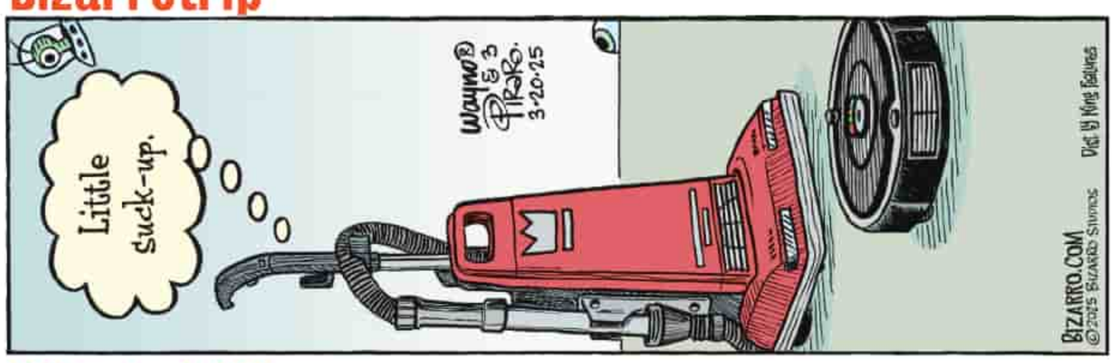
Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Popeye

Bizarrotrip



Diamond Lil

Hart of the city

Crankshaft

Mutts

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today, you may spend money on artistic or decorative items to renovate your home, which could enhance your social image. You might implement new strategies in the family business, likely bringing gains in the near future. Social or family gatherings may keep you occupied.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
It's a positive day with good energy and health. You'll enjoy your work, but are advised to avoid being too blunt in conversations. Steer clear of arguments over trivial matters to maintain peace at home. Job seekers may find promising opportunities. Couples should practice patience in communication.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
The Moon's absence may leave you feeling emotionally unsettled and impatient. You might struggle to stay focused or complete tasks, and could feel disconnected from your responsibilities. Try to avoid overthinking—rest and reflection may help restore your energy.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
You are blessed by the Moon today. Work pressure is likely to ease, and profits may begin to flow from previous efforts. Long-term investments look favorable, and you may receive a work-related overseas offer. Students could hear positive news, and singles may meet someone special.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Today is favorable for professional growth. You'll easily implement your plans with support from colleagues. Both intellectual and financial investments may start to yield returns. Your growing confidence and wise decision-making will benefit you significantly.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
Your spiritual energy is strong today. Positive thinking prevails, and you may feel drawn to religious or mystical experiences. A visit to a sacred place or interest in occult subjects is likely. Keep your deep thoughts private unless sharing with those who understand you well.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Restlessness may affect your mood today. You might feel drawn to spiritual or occult knowledge in search of peace. Trusting your intuition will be beneficial. You may gain deep insights into a subject or focus intensely on research. Chanting or meditation may bring calm.

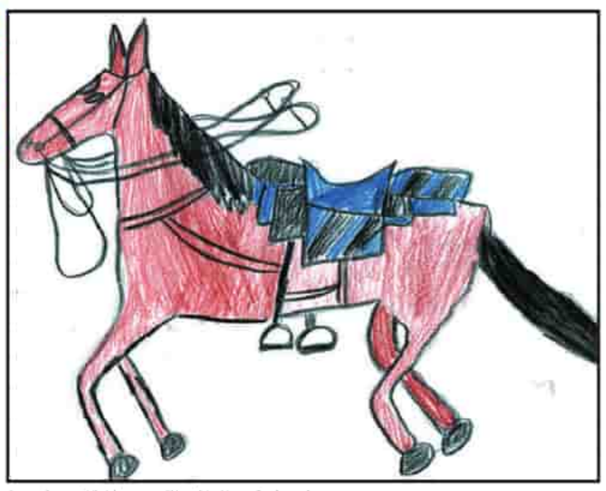
Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
The Moon's blessings strengthen your inner confidence. New work or business opportunities may arise, promising future gains. Couples might receive joyful news regarding childbirth. Clarity in communication will benefit love relationships and set a positive direction for the future.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Today brings good news regarding your career. Job seekers may focus effectively on entrance exams and succeed. Singles may receive promising proposals for marriage. Couples may celebrate uplifting news related to children.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
You may consider relocating today, but it's better to postpone such decisions. Avoid new business investments as well. By evening, things may improve with helpful advice from an elder. Their guidance will help you regain control over the situation.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Patience is your strength today. Meditation can improve focus, helping you accelerate your projects. Your team will be cooperative, which supports early completion of tasks. Short work-related trips are likely. You may also meet an influential person who could support your business growth.

KIDZONE



Arsalan, 10 Years, The Valley School

Kartikeya Kumar, 9 Years, VIBGYOR High

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M
= ((-8 x (10^-3) x 6 x (10^-3) x 10^12) / ((-4) x 10^2 x 10^3))
= ((12 x 10^6) / (10^5))
= 12 x 10^1 = 120

BULL'S EYE
erupt, peer, perm, PERMUTE, pert, pure, purse, rump, trump, repute, rupee, temper

RIDDLER
Friends in high places

FAST FIVE

C	A	S	T	S
U	N	H	I	T
R	I	A	T	A
E	M	B	A	R
D	A	U	N	T

STRIKE OUT

S	C	R	A	M	B	L	E		F	L	E	E	D	
T	O		L		I	O	N		I	A		E		
O	B	L	I	V	I	O	N		R	Y	A	N		
	O		E		I		N		A	M	I		U	
L	A	S	H		R	E	P	E	A	T	E	D		
	S			O			L		G		O	O	D	E
K	A	P	P	A		D	I	A	N	E				
H	E	N		T		E		S			M			
E	D	I	T	I	O	N	S		X	M	A	S		
A		M	A	C		C		O		A		A		
D	A	I	L		B	A	B	B	L	I	N	G		
E		S	E	M	I	S		O		D		A		
S	C	R	A	M	B	L	E		F	L	E	D		

QUICK

S	T	A	N	D		P	I	C	K	S		U	P	
M		E		E		M		I		R		O		
A	S	S	E	G	A	I		R	O	O	S	T		
E		T		N			U		T			S		
R	I	A	T	A		C	H	A	R	A	D	E		
T				H			S			R				
S	C	A	R	C	E		B	E	L	O	N	G		
		C				Y		L				N		
B	O	U	N	D	E	D		I	R	A	N	I		
A		R		E		E		T		G		H		
W	O	R	S	T		E	R	R	A	N	D	S		
A		E		C		R		E		O		A		
N	A	V	A	R	A	N	G		F	A	T	A	L	

MENSA PUZZLE
2. Reading each row as a 3 or 2 digit number, subtract the central 2 digit value from the upper 3 digit value, to give the 3 digit result on the lower row.

QUOTE UNCODE
He wrapped himself in quotations- as a beggar would enfold himself in the purple of Emperors.

SUDOKU

8	3	2	7	9	4	1	6	5
9	7	1	5	2	6	8	4	3
6	5	4	1	8	3	2	7	9
3	2	5	6	4	1	7	9	8
4	1	9	2	7	8	5	3	6
7	8	6	9	3	5	4	2	1
2	4	3	8	5	9	6	1	7
1	9	8	4	6	7	3	5	2
5	6	7	3	1	2	9	8	4

ALPHA TRIANGLE
E, Ne, Neo, Bone, Ebony, Bygone, Obeying.

GO FIGURE
Easy
7 + 2 + 4 x 1 = 13
Medium
6 - 4 x 3 + 5 = 11
Hard
9 + 4 x 5 - 5 = 60

LOOP

KAKURO

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Rajini dance
Rajinikanth impresses with his cool dance moves in the 'Chikitu' track from Coolie

CONFIDENCE AND CHARM

PC on her experience working with John Cena, Idris Elba

In the upcoming film 'Heads of State', Priyanka Chopra joins forces with John Cena and Idris Elba. While Cena and Elba portray influential political leaders, Priyanka takes on the role of a daring and fearless MI6 agent navigating the turmoil around them.

The actress Jonas shines as MI6 agent Noel Bisset, bringing a powerful mix of confidence and charm to the film. Alongside John Cena and Idris Elba, their sizzling chemistry, witty exchanges, and adrenaline-pumping action scenes make the movie a thrilling ride.

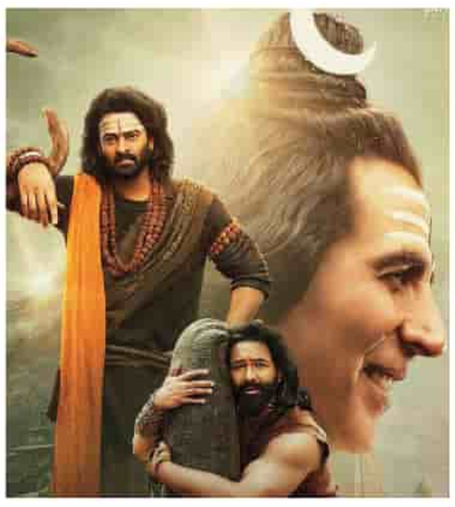
As reported in Money Control, Priyanka described her experience working with John Cena and Idris Elba as fantastic, saying she never felt excluded or out of place. Their collaboration began after Cena and Elba wanted to work together following Suicide Squad, which sparked the idea for the new film.

Producer Peter Safran saw the potential and decided to develop the project. Priyanka enjoyed being part of the journey, especially as the only woman amidst a strong masculine energy, and had a great time throughout the process.

John Cena and Idris Elba reunite for the second time after their standout performances as Peacemaker and Bloodsport in 'The Suicide Squad' (2021). Helmed by director Ilya Naishuller, 'Heads of State' features an impressive ensemble cast including Sarah Niles, Carla Gugino, Stephen Root, Paddy Considine, and Jack Quaid. This thrilling action-comedy, packed with political intrigue and witty humor, is set to debut exclusively on Prime Video on July 2. The film will be accessible in several languages such as English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Kannada.

—ETimes

With legal backing



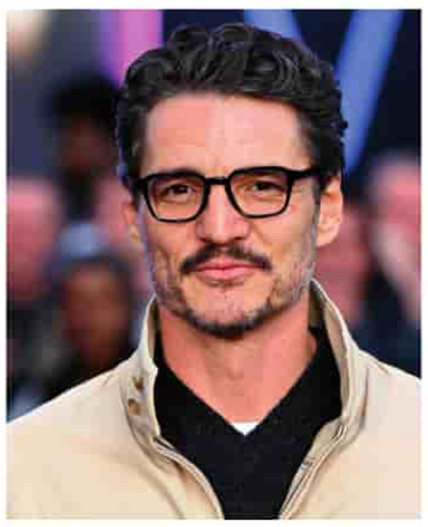
Vishnu Manchu's much-anticipated film Kannappa is set to hit cinemas on June 27. Ahead of its release, the makers have issued an official statement cautioning against the spread of negativity about the film online after it premieres. They warned that any malicious attempts to defame or misrepresent the project may lead to serious consequences.

The makers shared a Public Caution Notice on their official X (formerly Twitter) handle. It read: "Our film Kannappa releases globally on 27 June 2025 with full lawful clearances. Misuse, distortion, or defamatory acts against the film or its stakeholders will be legally challenged."

The post further stated:"The film has been created responsibly to engage with the public at large. We respectfully request all critics to watch the film first, appreciate its substance, understand the intent, and then comment with responsibility — rather than succumbing to premeditated biases or vendetta-fuelled commentary."

The statement also said that defaming the film may result in legal trouble. "While we recognise that the right to freedom of speech and expression is sacrosanct and enshrined under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution, it is also equally established through judicial interpretations that intentional and destructive attacks — physical or reputational — on a creative work are not protected speech but a form of actionable injury..." **— ETimes**

Pascal slams Rowling



Hollywood star Pedro Pascal is just done with author JK Rowling's views on transgender women. Two months after the actor went viral for calling out Rowling for her "disgusting behavior" after she supported an anti-transgender ruling in the UK, Pascal opened up about his decision to do so, reports 'People' magazine.

He told 'Vanity Fair' that the attention it brought felt briefly like "that kid that got sent to the principal's office a lot for behavioral issues in public schools in Texas feeling scared and thinking, What'd I do?" However, he was worried about whether he was helping or hurting the situation.

The actor, whose sister, Lux Pascal, came out as transgender in 2021, shared a comment under an Instagram video criticising Rowling for supporting the U.K. Supreme Court's April 16 ruling that the legal definition of a woman is based solely on biological sex under Britain's Equality Act. **—IANS**

Idea of equality in love only in films: Fatima

Actor Fatima Sana Shaikh on Wednesday said true equality in love means mutual respect and understanding, which she believes exists only in films.

The actor is coming out with her new film "Aap Jaisa Koi", a heartwarming romantic drama that delves into the lives of two unique individuals, Shrirenu Tripathi (Madhavan) and Madhu Bose (Shaikh).

The movie, directed by Vivek Soni explores the theme of equality in love and relationships.

"The idea of equality of love is where two people respect each other, and they will listen to each other and won't deny it. I think that is an equal relationship now and compromises need to be done by both.

"When you come into a partnership, you work towards the relationship without losing yourself. I think that is the way to have a successful relationship," Shaikh told reporters here at the film's trailer launch event. When asked whether she has found such love in life, the actor said, "No one is there. No good guys. They exist only in films." About Madhavan, Shaikh said she didn't want to let go of the chance to collaborate with the star.

— PTI

A mirror of life

Director D Satya Prakash deserves a pat on the back for handling the megaphone with aplomb. With this movie, Satya Prakash, who is known for directing Rama Rama Re, Man of the Match, and Ondalla Eradalla, has proved his mettle as an actor too. The specialty of the movie is it highlights human values and focuses on the need for humans to lead happy lives. The climax has the potential to melt your heart and some of the dialogues about an orphanage, old age home, and why humans cannot smile like flowers convey the much-needed message to children, who neglect their aged parents.

X&Y
3.0 RATING ★★★☆☆
- **DIRECTOR** D Satya Prakash
- **ACTORS** D Satya Prakash, Brinda Acharya, Atharva Prakash, Ayaana, Harini Srikanth, Doddanna
- **Duration** 108 minutes
- **Certification** U/A

The movie begins with a discussion between the creator and an unborn soul, which pleads with the former to send him to the earth. The creator agrees to send the soul to the earth on a 3-day 4-nights package and a task of finding his parents. At this juncture, the director introduces Kreede (Satya Prakash), an auto rickshaw owner-cum-driver with a golden heart but no luck in finding a suitable life partner. His sister (Harini Srikanth) and brother-in-law (Sundar) try their best to find a match for him but all the women reject him.

Meanwhile, Kreede injures a beggar (Atharva Prakash). He takes him to the hospital but the doctor declares the beggar brought dead. At this juncture, the soul enters the body and the beggar shows signs of life. He treats Kreede as his father and insists that he find his mother. He visits a marriage hall along with Asha (Ayaana), who is diagnosed with a rare disease, where Krupa (Brinda Acharya) is set to get married. You have to watch the movie to know what happens to Krupa and Kreede.

Satya Prakash has acted well. His dialogue delivery and gestures are good. He has faithfully followed the script. Atharva Prakash deserves appreciation for agreeing to play the beggar character that has no scope for heroism. Brinda Acharya looks beautiful. Ayaana, who is in the role of an orphan suffering from a rare disease, walks away with all honours. Sundar, Harini Srikanth, Sundar Veena provide good support.

Songs are not only melodious but also meaningful.

It is worth a watch by family audiences. **—Y Maheswara Reddy**